

Briefly noted

News in the [April 20, 2004](#) issue

Two top officials of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel resigned in March after the church lost \$14 million to two investment firms that have been alleged to be fraudulent. The resignations of the president, Paul Risser, and the corporate treasurer, Brent Morgan, were accepted during an annual cabinet meeting in Los Angeles, the denomination announced. A spokesman said Risser had been criticized by some denominational leaders for entrusting money from a church foundation to IPIC International Inc. of Ontario and Financial Advisory Consultants Inc. of Lake Forest, California. Federal authorities have described the firms as Ponzi schemes—which paid early investors with money obtained from later ones—and shut the firms down.

Twenty church leaders from Canada's major denominations have written to Prime Minister Paul Martin urging that Canada abandon any plans to join with the United States in its Ballistic Missile Defense strategy. "The extraordinary squandering of resources in the vain pursuit of technological immunity from nuclear weapons is itself an offense against the will of the Creator," said the church leaders in a four-page letter dated March 15. Signed by the national leaders of the 20 member churches of the Canadian Council of Churches, the letter was prompted by current negotiations which could result in Canada's lending support to the U.S. initiative to build a ground-based missile defense system. "We cannot afford to waste time and resources on an unworkable strategic missile defense scheme. The world cannot afford it," said Karen Hamilton, the church council's general secretary.